

A Caring School Community Dedicated To Excellence
Regular Meeting
Regional School Unit No. 38 Board of Directors
Maranacook Community High School
February 26, 2014
Minutes of Meeting

Members present: Chair David Greenham, Russell Evans, Jason Morgan, Melissa O’Neal, Bonnie Simcock, Richard Spencer, Jessica West
Members excused: Vice Chair Lynette Johnson, Michael Apolito, David Guillemette, Stephen Hayes, Marie Rodriguez, Madeline Snow
Administrators: Superintendent Donna Wolfrom, Principals Jeff Boston, Dwayne Conway, Pia Holmes, and Cathy Jacobs, Finance Manager Brigette Williams, Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction Nancy Harriman, Technology Director Jan Kolenda, Special Education Director Ryan Meserve, Adult Education Director Stephen Vose, Literacy Coordinator/Coach Barbara Bourgoine, Math Coordinator/Coach Sarah Caban, Director of Maintenance and Transportation Paul Criss, Student Services Director Al MacGregor

1. Call to order: Chair Greenham called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
2. Consent Agenda: The consent agenda items were voted on separately.
 - a. Approval of Minutes of January 22, 2014
MOTION by Evans, second by Simcock to approve the minutes of January 22, 2014 as presented.
Motion Carried: unanimously
 - b. Approval of Minutes of February 12, 2014
J. Morgan reported that he was listed as attending but was absent on February 12, 2014.
MOTION by Evans, second by Spencer to approve the minutes of February 12, 2014 as amended.
Motion Carried: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions (Morgan, Simcock).
 - c. Acceptance of Donations – ABS, \$2,070.00 for Nordic Ski Team Uniforms
MOTION by Evans, second by O’Neal to accept the donation from the Awesome Bear Society as noted.
Motion Carried: unanimous
 - d. Acceptance of teacher resignations due to retirement – Eileen Lynch, Readfield Elementary; John Whitney, High School; Janet Dunham, Elementary
MOTION by Spencer, second by Evans to accept the resignations due to retirement of Eileen Lynch, John Whitney, and Janet Dunham with sincere appreciation for their many years of service to the district.
Motion Carried: unanimous
 - e. Acceptance of administrator resignation – Janet Kolenda, Technology Director
MOTION by Simcock, second by Evans to accept the resignation of Janet Kolenda with sincere appreciation for her many years of service to the district.
Motion Carried: unanimous
3. Citizens’ Comments: not related to anything on the agenda. None
4. Additions/adjustments to the Agenda: None

Chair Greenham noted that the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) visiting team will be at Maranacook High School on Sunday, March 16, and it would be helpful if some Board members could attend. Principal Conway will confirm the time, but it is tentatively scheduled for 2:30 p.m. The Board was provided with a copy of the Maranacook Community High School Core Values and Beliefs Statement and Student Expectations for Learning.

5. Action/Discussion/Informational Items:

a. Report regarding Middle School NEASC Study

Superintendent Wolfrom provided some background on the decision to pursue New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation by the CSD Board back in 2008. The Middle School did move forward with the NEASC process, last spring the visiting committee came to the middle school, and we received a report from them in November. We received the highest level of NEASC certification along with commendations and recommendations. Superintendent Wolfrom believes that the NEASC report provided the school and board with the information the original school board was looking for through the commendations, and the recommendations provide the basis for the plan that the middle school principal and leadership team developed to meet the recommendations specified in the report. Also, Superintendent Wolfrom met with the middle school leadership team in early January to review the NEASC findings and believe the work they have started, especially their work with Sarah Caban, Barbara Bourgoine, and Nancy Harriman will result in the common assessments and expectations, and a Common Core Curriculum and Maine Learning Results. At this point she believes that the efforts of the middle school and district staff should be directed at completing the actions steps in the plan rather than in the task of committee report writing in order to fulfill NEASC expectations. She believes their time would be better spent working on the middle school plan, and that their accountability for the completion of the plan should rest with the RSU 38 Board and supports the proposal of the middle school to further the work without the continued affiliation of the NEASC.

B. Simcock offered the suggestion of adding two more columns to the School Improvement Plan for completion dates and evaluation of the outcome.

Chair Greenham commented this is a great solution and thanked the staff for their work.

MOTION by Spencer to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent, seconded by Evans.

Motion Carried: unanimous

b. Request to reschedule half-day Professional Development Day – March 20, 2014:

Superintendent Wolfrom reported that the district had an early release day planned for February 5 which was a snow day. There was much curriculum work and assessment analysis scheduled for that afternoon. She is requesting approval to reschedule the half-day workshop to the afternoon of Thursday, March 20, the day before the all day teacher in-service day. This will provide staff with a good block of time to get their work done. This requires board vote because it impacts the school calendar.

MOTION by Spencer, second by Evans to support the recommendation of Superintendent Wolfrom and approve rescheduling the February 5 half-day workshop day to March 20.

Motion Carried: unanimous

6. Budget Workshop:

a. Update from previous meeting:

The following updates were provided:

- i. Revised summary of budget reductions from original requests now includes amounts next to each reduction;
- ii. Graph of teacher and educational technician positions;
- iii. EPS spreadsheets based on the funding formula that comes from the state.

b. English Language Learners (ELLs):

Superintendent Wolfrom reported that there are 17 students being served in this program; with a half-time teacher and half-time educational technician. The program is now in compliance with state regulations. The total reduction in the ELLs budget is 17%, which is due to our no longer being associated with the Phoenix Academy after this year and change in educational technician staff.

R.Evans asked that since Phoenix Academy is a wash any ways, what is the actual reduction? B.Williams responded \$3,775.

c. Gifted and Talented:

Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Nancy Harriman reported that 81 students are currently being served under the Gifted and Talented Program; with 56 students receiving support for academic needs and 31 for visual and performing arts. Students are spread across the grades 3-12. We have three staff working in one or more buildings and there are no changes in staffing proposed for next year. There are some minor reductions in material, but overall the budget comes in at 0% increase.

d. Special Education:

Special Education Director Ryan Meserve reported that 131 students are currently being served through the special education program and that number has remained relatively stable, although they do deal with a lot of students moving in and out of the district during the year. Last year there was an additional teacher in the budget for the middle school, but it was reduced because it wasn't needed. Projected student numbers for next year are up slightly, and are projecting higher levels of need. The budget as presented includes a request for an additional program. Staffing for the program includes one K-5 teacher for the new K-5 Readiness Skills Program, two educational technicians, and one additional day for administrative oversight. The new program would be a district wide program and would be housed at Readfield Elementary School. There is also a student who has moved into the district that was an out of district placement, but we feel comfortable that with the additional staff we can provide for the student in district.

e. Operations & Maintenance:

Facilities and Transportation Director Paul Criss reviewed the list of projects proposed for the FY 15 school year. All recommendations are based on the safety and maintenance of the facilities in the District. Projects total \$165,818 and represent a 6% increase in the budget.

f. Transportation:

Superintendent Wolfrom reported that the draft Transportation budget includes the purchase of two new buses, of which funding would be reimbursed in the next year through the subsidy amounts from the State. The Board will also be entering negotiations with the bus drivers. Current buses to be replaced are 13 years old and have over 150,000 miles.

Paul Criss added that changes include the elimination of one bus run, and he is requesting an engine/electrical system analyzer for the mechanic. Currently the mechanic is using an old Palm Pilot to run the diagnostics on the bus engines. This piece of equipment will allow the mechanic to continue to repair the buses without sending them out to a private garage for analysis.

g. Technology:

Technology Director Jan Kolenda reported on the requests for the technology department which includes a remote server system for the PowerSchool program; two smart switches, one for Manchester Elementary and one for Readfield Elementary to allow the

networks that were moved from the high school to work at the elementary schools; and funds to mount classroom projectors in each of the classrooms. Currently the projectors are all sitting on carts. They are also looking to have funds available for teachers so they can start purchasing specific “Apps” to compliment their common core instruction. Network Maine, who has provided internet service for free, needs to look for schools to start paying a small amount that is based on \$1.00 per student. With these requests the technology budget as currently proposed is 14% lower than last year.

R. Evans asked if teachers are allowed to purchase “Apps” on their own or do they need to have it approved? J. Kolenda responded that she is not familiar with any teachers purchasing “Apps” for their classrooms. Technology Integrationist Diane MacGregor added that they have been meeting as grade-level groups, exploring “Apps” and sharing information, and are working on getting a system in place so purchases will be based on curriculum needs and quality “Apps”.

h. Co & Extra Curricular:

Student Services Director Al MacGregor provided an overview of the middle school and high school co and extra curricular budget, noting that 73% of the budget is salaries, which is negotiated through the staff association. The remainder of the budget consists of transportation - 6%; dues and fees - 6%; officials - 6%; supplies - 5%; porta-potties - 1%. In trying to make cuts he reported on the work he has done in developing an intramural program for the middle school, by bringing the coaches from the high school to work with the middle school students in an intramural setting during off seasons. The reductions would total about \$12,000 salaries; \$4,700 transportation; \$4,600 officials; for a total of \$21,300, about 5%.

B. Simcock asked about the current state of families becoming caught up with activity fees. A. MacGregor responded that it has only been a problem at the middle school level. He noted that high school teams have access to the Awesome Bear Society for assistance.

M. O’Neal asked about the possibility of MaineGeneral discontinuing their work with Maranacook if middle school sports are eliminated. A. MacGregor responded there was talk about that possibility if we were to cut back on the daytime support MaineGeneral currently provides to the high school and middle school, but that would not be the case here.

R. Evans asked about the middle school co & extra curricular fees; are there fees that are owed but not paid? Yes, which is part of the problem, but there was also lower than expected participation.

Chair Greenham asked if this is a program other schools in Maine have tried and are doing successfully or are we breaking new ground? A. MacGregor responded that this is new ground. Principal Jacobs added that she sent out the question to other middle schools and no one that responded has gone strictly to intramural programs; some run intramurals in conjunction with athletic program. A. MacGregor added that he did email coaches to get their impression on this proposal. He received 5-6 responses and there are concerns.

M. O’Neal asked about possible savings with the staff retirements? Superintendent Wolfrom responded that there will be retirement payouts that need to be budgeted for and she can’t guarantee any savings on hiring.

Concerns were raised that the pupil impact for this level of savings is unjustified and unfair when only looking at the middle school. Suggest looking at small increases in activity fees and better consistency in collecting the fees, as well as considering reductions in providing transportation for some activities.

The Board discussed how fees are collected. A. MacGregor reported that it was not supposed to be the coaches’ responsibility to collect fees, although some coaches are doing it. Money is turned in to Al’s administrative assistant and the monies are sent down to the central office for deposit. When the fee structure was created they were supposed to be team fees, but it has evolved into more of an individual fee. Al has told coaches that students can practice but

cannot play in games until fees are paid. The original intent was if a team had not paid their fees, the sport would not continue in the next year. Currently there are balances due on both Middle School girls' field hockey and Middle School boys' soccer, so if we were to enforce the original intentions these sports would not run next fall. We need to come up with solutions to get the fees collected.

i. Miscellaneous Cost Centers/Accounts

Adult education – Adult Education Director Steve Vose presented the Adult & Community Education budget. Funding sources total \$179,340 this year and are expected to total 175,832 for FY15. The Department also relies on 3 grants – Adult Basic Education, College Transition and Maine College Access Grants for funding. The Adult Basic Education and the Maine College Access grants are combined with other school districts.

Food Service – Superintendent Wolfrom reported on the recent federal program audit which went very well. Finance Manager Williams reported that we do raise local dollars to support the food service budget. The district is not high in free and reduced lunches and this is where schools receive subsidies from the state. The proposal is to continue to provide \$100,000 in local funds to support the program.

Health Services – Superintendent Wolfrom reported that the Health Services budget is reduced by 3% due to a change in staffing due to retirement. During the annual meeting two years ago the communities voted to set aside \$36,000 to help fund the Health Center due to the uncertainty of grant funding at the time. The grant did come through and last year the communities voted at the Annual Meeting to set this amount aside should the Health Center need the money at a later time. Last month, Superintendent Wolfrom asked the members of the Health Services Advisory Committee for their opinion about releasing the \$36,000 so that it can go toward the FY15 budget, and they unanimously supported the request. The Board will be asked to vote to support this request at an upcoming meeting so that it can be taken to the citizens at the next Annual Meeting for consideration.

Professional Development – Superintendent Wolfrom reported this includes staff professional development, membership with Western Maine Educational Collaborative, and the District's Recertification Committee. The proposed budget represents a reduction of \$3,053.

Curriculum – Superintendent Wolfrom reported that half of the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment's salary has been moved from instruction to this budget. Nancy Harriman added that there is also some summer curriculum work included. There are no proposed changes in staffing and the overall budget amount is down by \$23,552.

Assessment – Nancy Harriman reported that this budget includes half of her salary. The only change from the current year is to purchase proficiency testing in the foreign languages for middle school and high school students in the amount of \$2,750.

Systems Administration – Superintendent Wolfrom reported this budget is up by 1% due to increased costs in legal and auditing fees.

Debt Service – B. Williams outlined the debt service budget as well as a spreadsheet outlining all of the district's debt and equipment lease purchases. Total district principal debt at the end of FY14 will be \$5,184,768.

j. Board questions: asked at the end of each presentation.

k. Citizens comments regarding budget:

Maddie Taylor, 8th grade student at Maranacook Middle School spoke in support of the athletics program at the middle school and how they had a positive impact on her life as she prepares to enter the high school next year.

Maura Taylor, 6th grade student at Maranacook Middle School also spoke about the importance of having the opportunity to participate in sports at the middle school, how it impacts students' commitment to their studies, and contributes to the physical well being of students.

Rob Schmidt, resident of Readfield, coach at the high school and parent of children in the district spoke about the qualities of students that come from our schools. He supports keeping organized sports at the middle school and does not believe intramural sports teach children about competition. He is also concerned that the Awesome Bear Society has taken on the responsibility of purchasing uniforms for teams, and questioned why the players' fees and basketball gate fees go to the general fund. He asked if the salaries of athletic directors and assistants usually come out of the general fund. A. MacGregor responded that it varies from school to school. Instead of eliminating competitive sports at the middle school he suggested that everyone work harder to collect the fees owed, and let everyone know that the students won't get a uniform if they don't pay. He added, that if it comes down to it, he would rather see transportation fees cut and keep to middle school sports.

Matt Galletta, resident of Manchester asked the Board not to make any changes. Once something is eliminated it's almost impossible to bring it back. He quoted some information from MPA annual report, adding that there is room for both academics and sports. Please don't take away things that the Maranacook community values.

Aaron McClure – 8th grade basketball coach at the middle school, served as volunteer coach with Rob Schmidt, and coached several recreation teams. He is also concerned with the lessons learned brought up by Rob and disagrees with some of the information in Al's proposal to go strictly to an intramural program. There can be a better system put in place for accountability, transportation, coaching for less or no pay; and it would not be difficult to come up with the money you are looking to save by eliminating middle school sports.

Shawn Drillen, resident of Readfield supported the comments by Rob and Aaron. He expressed his appreciation to the Board members for the work they do but strongly believes that the middle school program should continue to be an interscholastic program.

Val Pomerleau, Readfield Select Board member agrees there should be no reason you can't get volunteers to help with the middle school. If the parents want their children playing sports they need to pitch in. She also asked about the additional money voted in at the last Annual Meeting for teacher retirement – where is that money going to go? B. Williams replied that the state did vote in the additional money and we are receiving it this year, so it will go forward as a balance forward to be used next year FY15. Ms. Pomerleau also commented about the need to bring insurance to something more in line with what's affordable.

Chris McKee, Wayne parent, business person and former coach supports the middle school interscholastic program. He asked that we look at it as we have \$20,000 to raise in funds and it will get done.

Linda Smith, Manchester resident reiterated Rob Schmidt's comments about the fees collected at the door and activity fees. If the fees were not going to the general fund they could be used toward the co curricular budget. She asked the board to revisit establishing an interscholastic committee again because there are some glitches that might be able to be fixed.

David Hefner, Readfield resident spoke about the tax increase in Readfield this past year and the great restriction it had on the Town. He believes the problem is with the student to teacher ratio in the schools, the report he quoted from states the district has a 11:1 ratio. The increase in health insurance is due to the volume of teachers you have in place. He would like to see a reduction in the budget not just flat funding.

M. O'Neal asked for clarification on the 11:1 ratio. B. Williams replied that the ratio quoted includes all teachers, not just classroom teachers. It includes art, music, gifted and talented, physical education; the numbers are averaged out to include all specials' teachers.

Andy Smith, parent of a senior and recent graduate commented that he values and supports all of it. Thinks it would be a mistake to eliminate competitive sports at the middle school. There is a large willingness to pay and there is an interesting thought of why fees are not paid at the middle school. Lacrosse parents are paying \$150 for each kid to play, the hockey

parents are paying. There are ways to get the money and we need to look at that. The problem is that the middle school has a participation rate of 30% and 40% at the high school, which means the majority of students are not participating in sports. They need something else; there may be a role for some sort of intramural program but not a duplicate of what is currently offered. There is a need for more opportunities for kids to be active and for some kids it won't be competitive sports.

John Harker, resident of Mt. Vernon commented that his goal is to get the best outcome for the dollar input; focus on nutritious diets and volunteerism is critical. Salaries in the food service program are over 45% of the budget. Mr. Harker proposed an apprenticeship program where the Dept. of Labor will fund half of the cost for students to work with Jeff Bridges in the food service program, and it also counts toward college credit for the students. Regarding volunteerism, Mr. Harker donated 200 pounds of frozen tomatoes and other farmers are willing to do the same to get good fresh food into the program. He wants to help Jeff get more good food in the schools for the kids. The District still doesn't have a good nutrition program in place. Need intramural sports in addition to varsity sports.

Harry Lanphear, resident of Manchester, parent and former board member spoke regarding student motivation when they are involved in co and extra curricular activities. It is important to keep programs.

MOTION by Simcock, second by O'Neal to allow Fayette resident Joel Swimm to address the Board.

Motion Carried: unanimous.

Joel Swimm – resident of Fayette has two children at Maranacook. Mr. Swimm spoke of the successes of his children at Maranacook and asked the Board to consider the unexpected choices that residents of Fayette may make for their children if the middle school does away with their sports program.

1. Board discussion:

R. Evans - several people suggested volunteer coaches; would that be allowed in our current contract? If it is a position listed in the negotiated agreement then it must be a paid position.

B.Simcock – suggested that prior to the Board's next decision making meeting to look at some transportation cuts for sports and raising activity fees to see what that revenue would bring us?

Chair Greenham – continue looking at all the options, no question of the value of these programs, but need solutions to be able to afford them.

7. Adjournment: **MOTION** and second to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna H. Wolfrom, Superintendent/Secretary
Recorded by: D.Foster